

NORTHERN PLAINS AREA

Policy Memorandum

DATE: September 15, 2001

SUBJECT: SECURITY AT NPA FACILITIES

NUMBER: PM-01-002

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately Until Replaced or Superseded

1. Purpose

The safety and security of our employees, co-operators, and collaborators is of paramount importance to ARS; security of research projects and products is key to our mission; and the protection of our facilities is critical to the conduct of that research. This Memorandum describes basic requirements for physical security, and procedures for reporting suspicious activities and/or incidents at all facilities in the Northern Plains Area. It will be used in conjunction with other agency policy concerning the safety of employees and the security of our facilities. This guidance is not intended to be comprehensive, nor to replace sound judgment on the part of supervisors or managers.

2. Occupant Emergency Plans

Each research location will have a current Occupant Emergency Plan that details procedures to be employed and actions to be taken in response to emergencies. The plan will be developed in accordance with the guidance in ARS Policy and Procedure (P&P) 240.3, Physical Protection, Security, and Conduct While on ARS Controlled Property. The plan must be reviewed annually to ensure contact points and procedures are current and must be practiced at least once per year. A copy of the plan must be provided to each employee and to the Area Safety Manager.

3. Emergency Dismissals and Closures

Generally, emergency dismissals and/or facility closures that require the use of administrative leave should be used when the facility is closed for the safety and security of personnel. The most common examples are weather emergencies or closure of the facility for safety/health reasons such as plumbing or electrical failure. Only the head of the organization (Research Leader, Laboratory Director, Center Director, or person acting in that capacity) has the authority to close a facility and dismiss federal employees. Such a decision should be made in consultation with appropriate local officials, local Federal Executive Associations where they exist, and the Area Office if time permits. Dismissal of state or cooperator employees working at the facility should be coordinated with appropriate authorities or be in accordance with pre-arranged procedures. In an emergency situation, leaders should err on the side of caution for personnel safety and security. When

notified of a Federal, Department, or Agency wide emergency closure, all employees are expected to depart the workplace after exercising assigned responsibilities for shut-down. In locally ordered closures or dismissals, leaders have broad discretion to determine a need for exigency employees to remain in or return to the facility.

4. Visitor Logs

Each location will maintain a record of visitors to the facility, to include visiting scientists temporarily working in ARS laboratories or other research facilities. These records will consist of the date or duration of a visit, the current address of the visitor, the citizenship of the visitor, and the reason for the visit. Group visits of students may be recorded as groups by the adult sponsor. Visitor logs must be maintained accurately, be retained indefinitely, and be in such order that they can be inspected by outside investigators. Foreign visitors must be reported in accordance with established procedures.

5. Reporting Security Incidents

Locations will report any type of threatening or suspicious incidents to the Area Director's or Area Administrative office. Depending upon the nature and immediacy of the threat, other appropriate authorities, such as local law enforcement officers, should be summoned. All physical records, including e-mail or notes of telephone conversations, should be preserved for law enforcement officials. Employees should also be encouraged to report incidents which may be related to their employment but occur outside the workplace and/or during non-duty hours. Contact initiated by law enforcement officials, such as OIG, FBI, or local authorities should be reported to the Area Directors office.

6. Identification Cards and Badges

Federal employees must be issued official employee identification with picture and signature and should display identification at all times while on the facility (ARS) premises. Locations may develop local identification badges for personnel authorized routine access to the facility. Access badges of this type should not reference or imply that the badge holder is an employee of ARS or the location. Such identification must positively identify the individual (federal, state, university, or collaborator) as authorized to be on the facility or in the building, must include the a picture of the badge holder, and must be numbered or otherwise accounted for in a recordkeeping system. Locations must maintain positive control of badges issued to location personnel and require they be surrendered when personnel are no longer employed at the location. Visitors should be required to display a 'visitor pass' or badge while on the facility. Locations housed in University facilities should encourage Federal employees to display appropriate identification in ARS workspaces, and are required to maintain records of individuals visiting ARS laboratories in these facilities.

7. Facility Security

New construction, modernization projects, and remodeling of facilities in the Northern Plains Area will include such standard basic security features as entry doors which are

equipped with 'swipe' or 'proximity' card readers that are centrally controlled to record and limit access to office/laboratory complexes. Security lighting and fire suppressant features are also required. Additional appropriate protective measures must be determined locally based upon the level of risk to personnel and research products. Increased security requirements may be also determined in periodic security assessments conducted by the Agency or Area Office.

8. Security of Outbuildings, Plots, and Support Facilities

Local security assessments will assist in determining the level of protection which may be necessary for outbuildings, above ground fuel storage tanks, utility areas, research plots, fields, and other types of structures or research sites which may support location research. The nature and need for such protection should be based upon the exposure and the level of risk involved. Structures which may house chemicals or flammables should be protected by appropriate locks, fences, lighting, or other security features.

9. Publications and Information

Informational publications, including web sites, newsletters, brochures, and other materials, in printed, electronic, or other media, should not contain material that could attract adverse attention by radical groups. Those who prepare and approve such publications should seek guidance from the area office if questions arise concerning the sensitivity of such material. Currently, clear references to bioengineering projects, animal research, and similar topics should not be advertised to the general public.

10. Responsibilities

Research Leaders, Laboratory and Center Directors, and Location Administrative Officers are responsible for developing plans, communicating plans and procedures to employees, and ensuring that facilities are secured to the extent practicable under local conditions. These individuals are responsible for notifying the Area Office of any incidents or concerns regarding security issues, and for coordinating with local law enforcement officials to report criminal or suspicious activity.

11. Questions/Guidance

Questions concerning this policy or requests for waivers from this policy may be directed to the Area Administrative Office.



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